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Editorial Introduction: To Stay Afloat, Maybe Collaborate?

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Editor of *Networks*

It is a COVID year. That seems to be the start of almost every conversation or meeting. COVID has changed, slowed down, or eliminated many of the activities of our teaching and scholarly lives, while at the same time, increased the responsibilities, work load, and stress in our professional and personal lives. Like other journals, *Networks* has been impacted by COVID too. Fewer submissions, longer wait times for reviews and copy editing, and a shorter issue. In education specifically, much of the work of the journal is being done by women because public-school teachers are primarily women (NCES, 2020), as are teacher educators (Lowenstein, 2009). Scholarly work has slowed down for women, as they have shouldered the responsibility of care-taking, both at home and at work (Squazzoni et al., 2020; Yildirim & Eslen-Ziya, 2021).

Personally, I have found the year of 2020-2021 to be my year of collaboration – it is how I stayed afloat in the midst of this storm of COVID. My colleagues and collaborators have been sympathetic ears, voices of reason, and at times, accountability buddies. For this issue, I am delighted to provide two thoughtful articles that highlight the importance of collaboration in action research.

The first article is a study conducted through a collaborative effort between an elementary public-school teacher and an associate professor at a liberal arts college. The teacher used brain energizers, which decreased off-task behavior and created an engaged and re-vitalized first grade classroom, according to the study by **Buchanan, Davis, and Cury**. As the teacher researcher realized the importance of movement in the classroom, the practice spread through the

school and the district. According to the teacher involved in this study, additional benefits of implementing brain energizers in the classroom included that they were free and did not require a substantial time commitment. Plus, this article also provided some practical tips on using brain energizers in the classroom.

Mathematics teacher educators **Keazer** and **Maher** used action research to better understand their pre-service teachers' perspectives and experiences with math. By emphasizing the importance of finding connections between mathematics and their pre-service teachers' cultures, they hoped their pre-services teachers would experience the enhanced learning that results from cultural practices being honored and connected to mathematics. Their investigation allowed them to develop math instruction that was more relevant and authentic for the pre-service teachers. However, like most action research projects, they developed new questions like, "Did our students *really* learn to see mathematics in their lives, or did they simply learn to better produce what we were looking for?"

Throughout this year people have uttered the cliché that "We are all in this together." As other memes have indicated, it may be true that we are all in the same storm, but some of us have yachts and others have dinghies. I hope that whatever vessel you have, you are able to stay afloat. And, through collaboration with other supportive and energetic people, you continue to research and improve your practice. As you do, I hope you will consider sharing your learning with the readers of *Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research*.

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